

8135-6-8
23

SOUTHWARK SOCIETY,

OF THE

FRIENDS OF THE PEOPLE.

At a Meeting of the General Committee holden Oct. 2,
1792, at the Three-Tuns-Tavern:

Resolved unanimously,

That the "DECLARATION of the SUBSCRIBERS towards
a FUND for the Succour of the PEOPLE of POLAND," be
printed and circulated by this Society.

POLISH SUBSCRIPTION.

At a General Meeting of the Subscribers towards a Fund for
the Succour of the People of Poland, held at the Mansion-
House of London, on Thursday, the 27th of September,
The Right Hon. JOHN HOPKINS, Lord-Mayor,
in the Chair:

It was resolved unanimously to publish the following De-
claration of the Sentiments of this Meeting on the Event of
the Fall of Poland under a foreign Yoke.

DECLARATION.

We had hopes of being able to contribute, in some degree,
to the assistance of the People of Poland: these hopes have
been defeated by the successful operations of a superior
Force, which the Polish nation, exerting their utmost un-
assisted efforts in defence of their country, had no power to
resist.

C



47
10 / 9
121

resist. Our only duty now is to declare our opinion of these transactions. The only consolation left us is to reflect, that we have done every thing that depended on *individuals*, to rescue the character of the British nation from the *scandal* and *dishonour* of affecting a **BASE NEUTRALITY**, or of *looking on with indifference*, while the independence of a great kingdom, and **THE FREEDOM OF A CONSIDERABLE PORTION OF MANKIND**, were sacrificed to **LAWLESS VIOLENCE**, and crushed under the dominion of a **FOREIGN TYRANNY**. The fact is atrocious, but the precedent is alarming. In the ruin of *one* helpless inoffensive nation, the *other states of Europe*, and **THIS COUNTRY in particular**, ought to see an **EXAMPLE** and a **WARNING** of the principles and practice of ambition, which **THEY MAY EXPERIENCE IN THEIR TURN**. We cannot be persuaded that the rapid progress and approach of **MILITARY POWER**, that the apparent resolution of a great confederacy to *divide the continent of Europe among them*, are objects and events in which *this nation has no concern*. Is it a thing to be believed, that the king of Poland would have been deserted as he has been by the *natural enemies* and *rivals* of **RUSSIA**, if this conquest had not **MADE PART OF A MORE EXTENSIVE SYSTEM**, concerted among them, of which Poland is only the *first victim*, and which is to furnish the means of equal aggrandizement to the *other contracting parties*? We may rely on our internal strength, or we may confide in our situation. *But what SOLID SECURITY HAVE WE*, that this *powerful confederacy* may not be able to create or collect a maritime force *sufficient to contend with the navy of Great Britain*? If that should ever happen, a *single event* might lay this island open to the *same armies of DISCIPLINED BARBARIANS*, to which the rest of Europe may have been compelled to submit. **WHEN THE FORCE IS SUFFICIENT THE PRETENCES NEVER FAIL**. In the case of Poland there was **NONE**. All we have heard is, that *it did NOT SUIT the views of Russia*, that a *limited monarchy*, an hereditary crown, or a *reasonable constitution* of **ANY KIND**, should exist in that country; — **THAT THE MASS OF THE PEOPLE SHOULD HAVE A LAW TO APPEAL TO, OR A GOVERNMENT TO PROTECT THEM**.

We

We submit these reflections to the WISDOM and GENEROSITY of the nation, with a thorough conviction that, on this subject, their wisdom and their generosity will lead them to the same conclusion:

JOHN HOPKINS, Mayor, Chairman.

Resolved unanimously,

That the warmest thanks of every Friend to the Liberty and Happiness of the People are due to the Right Hon. the Lord-Mayor, John William Anderson and Harvey Christian Combe, Esq. Sheriffs, and the rest of the Subscribers towards a fund for the succour of the People of Poland, for their very spirited and truly valuable DECLARATION: and we earnestly recommend the same to the serious attention of our countrymen.

Resolved unanimously,

That the virtue and integrity, peculiar to ELECTED magistrates, are resplendent in the conduct of the Lord-Mayor and Sheriffs, men who have derived their power from the People.

JOHN FREDERIC SCHIEFER, Secretary.

RULES of the SOCIETY.

I. The number of members to be unlimited, and each subscribe not less than 1s. 6d. per quarter, for the purpose of carrying on the designs of the Institution.

II. The Society shall meet in small parties, or divisions, monthly, on any day in the first week of the month, except Tuesday. — Ten members to constitute a division; and, when they shall amount to thirty, it shall be subdivided, and form two.

III. Each

III. Each division to elect a chairman and secretary quarterly, and at the first meeting of the quarter. The chairman to be their representative in a General Committee; and, in case the division shall consist of twenty persons, another representative shall be chosen to accompany the chairman. The secretary shall record the transactions, and deliver, quarterly, to the General Committee a correct list of the members of such division, collect the subscriptions, and pay them forthwith to the treasurer of the Society.

IV. The representatives shall form a General Committee, meet every Tuesday, and, at their first meeting in each quarter, elect a chairman and principal secretary. They shall correspond with similar institutions, determine on all publications to be circulated by the Society, report to their respective divisions the proceedings and correspondence of the Committee, and, in all cases, be governed by the prevailing sentiments of their constituents.

V. The chairman of the General Committee shall be treasurer for the time being, receive the subscriptions, pay all disbursements under the direction of the Committee, and have his Accounts audited by the next succeeding Committee.

VI. Each division shall determine within itself on the mode of admitting members, and all other matters not provided for in the foregoing articles.

The Friends of Freedom, resident in Southwark and its environs, are invited to form immediate Associations in their respective neighbourhoods; and, either as divisions or independent bodies, to communicate with the General Committee of this Society. The Committee also inform them, that divisions are already formed at the following places, Borough High-street; Dean-street; Bermondsey-street; Black-Friers-road; Newington, &c. and that, for further particulars, application may be made to

JOHN FREDERIC SCHIEFER,
Secretary to the Committee, London-road, Southwark.

